THE
Support of the Faithful
IN
Times of Persecution.
OR, A
SERMON
Preach'd in the Wilderness
TO THE
Poor Protestants in FRANCE.

By M. **Brousson**, an Eminent Minister, who was broke upon the Wheel at *Montpelier*, *Nov.* 6. N.S. 1698.

Faithfully Translated from the French.

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IT *is hop'd the* Reader *will not be diſpleaſed with theſe following Paſſages, as not altogether unſuitable to this Diſcourſe.*

True Chriſtianity is not only the beſt, but the beſt natur'd Inſtitution in the World; and ſo far as any Church is departed from good Nature, and become Cruel and Barbarous, ſo far it is degenerated from Chriſtianity. [A. B. *Tillotſon's* Sermons, Vol. III. 2 Edit. p. 26.

'I have learnt from the antient Fathers of the Church, that '*nothing is more againſt Religion than to force Religion*, and of 'St. *Paul*, *The Weapons of the Chriſtian Warfare are not Car-*'*nal.* And great reaſon; for humane Violence may make Men 'counterfeit, but cannot make them believe, and is therefore fit 'for nothing but to breed Form without, and Atheiſm within. 'Beſides, if this means of bringing Men to embrace any Re-'ligion where generally uſed (as if it may be juſtly uſed in 'in any place by thoſe that have power, and think they have 'Truth, certainly they cannot with Reaſon deny, but that 'it may be uſed in every place, by thoſe that have power as 'well as they, and think they have truth as well as they) what 'could follow but the maintenance perhaps of Truth, but per-'haps only of the Profeſſion of it in one place, and the Op-'preſſion of it in a hundred? What will follow from it, but 'the preſervation peradventure of Unity, but peradventure 'only of Uniformity, in particular States and Churches; but 'the immortalizing the greater and more lamentable Diviſions 'of Chriſtendom and the World? And therefore what can fol-'low from it, but perhaps in the Judgment of Carnal Policy, 'the Temporal Benefit and Tranquility of Temporal States and 'Kingdoms, but the infinite prejudice, if not the deſolation 'of the Kingdom of Chriſt.

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The Preface.

Reader,

THE Groans *of our poor* diſtreſs'd Brethren *in* France, *have for ſeveral Years paſt, reached our Ears, and toucht our Hearts, and I hope many pious Souls have not failed daily, and with fervor, to commit their ſad caſe to God, and to beg of him Support and Conſolation, for ſo many miſerable People. Our Relation to them in the Profeſſion of the ſame* Reformed Religion, *the* common Tenderneſs of humane Nature, *and the* ſhare that we ought to have in their Sorrows, *by vertue of that Precept of St.* Paul, To weep with them that weep, *do all oblige us to think of them with the greateſt Compaſſion, and to pray, that either the* bitter Cup may paſs from them, *or be* ſweetned *with the Love of God; and that when their Tryals are encreaſed, their Faith and Patience may be ſo too. For the* Furnace *is newly heated, and the* Cloud *over them more thick and diſmal, as will appear to any one that reads the Declaration, given at* Verſailles *the 13th of* Decemb. 1698.

Tho' theſe bleſſed Servants of God are greatly afflicted, yet they are not forſaken. They have Manna in the Deſart; *of which the* Reader *has a taſte in the following* Sermon. *The Honeſty, and Sincerity, and Love to the Souls of Men, which appears in every part of it, will make a ſufficient Apology for ſeveral things that a* curious Reader *might expect. There is in this* Diſcourſe *a warm Zeal, and an Eloquence ſuited to the Condition of the Preacher and his Hearers. People in* deep Mourning *do not affect Finery, but wear a grave ſolemn Dreſs. The* Wilderneſs *has not thoſe Varieties that are to be found in* Cities *and* Courts; *but the* Faithful, *that are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake, find there* ſweet Refreſhments *and* Conſolations: *And* John *the Baptiſt did not ſtarve, when he fed upon* Locuſts *and* wild Honey.

The Preface.

This Sermon was preach'd in the Wilderneſs *by M.* Brouſſon, *and taken out of a Volume of ſeveral Sermons, Printed in* Holland, *and approv'd by the French Synod, held at* Haerlem, *in the Year* 1695.

How exemplary the Converſation of this bleſſed Man was, how convincing his Doctrine, and how ſuitable to miniſter Conſolation to his poor Brethren, as alſo with what admirable Zeal and Conſtancy he triumph'd over all Dangers, and over Death its ſelf, will appear when his Life *is publiſh'd, which is promiſed to the Publick by thoſe that were acquainted with him, & we expect with great earneſtneſs, as knowing many remarkable and uſeful things, as well as extraordinary, muſt be in the Life of ſo great a Man; who, whilſt he lived, preached under the Croſs, and died with a Patience and Conſtancy, ſuited to the chearful Hopes that he had of a glorious Eternity; where he now reſts from his Labours and his Pains, and where all his Tears are wiped away.*

If this Sermon, which was tranſlated from the Original in French, *meet with acceptance, the Reader may expect more in due time; and methinks ſuch Sermons muſt come with a peculiar advantage, which were preach'd by ſuch an one, as ſeal'd with his Blood, the Doctrine that he taught; He ſat in brightneſs, and has left heat and warmth behind him.*

That the Reading of this Diſcourſe may do good to many Souls, is the Prayer of,

Tim. Rogers.

THE

THE Support and Confidence OF BELIEVERS IN Times of Perſecution

ISAIAH XLI. 14.

Fear not, thou Worm Jacob, *and ye Mortal Men of* Iſrael: *I will help thee, ſaith the Lord, and thy Redeemer is the Holy One of* Iſrael.

My Beloved Brethren in Chriſt,

IN the 7th Chapter of *The Book of* Job, that Holy Man ſays, * *That the State appointed for Mortals upon Earth, is a ſtate of Warfare*, and that their Days, are as the days of a Hireling. And 'tis ſo in effect, for Men ſpend their Time in continual Labour, Trouble and

* Engliſh Verſion, *An appointed time to Man upon Earth.*

Inquietude. But if that be true, with reſpect to all Men in general, 'tis more peculiarly ſo with reſpect to the Faithful: For their whole Life is but one continued Combate, againſt the Fleſh, the World, and the Devil. God makes them very often undergo very rude and ſevere Tryals. *Many are the Afflictions of the Righteous*, ſays *David*, *Pſalm* 34. 19. The Days of the Faithful are few and evil, as thoſe of the Patriarch *Jacob* of old. The Faithful are in continual Troubles and Alarums. If they were of the World, the World would love them; but becauſe they are not of the World, the World hates and perſecutes them. They are generally weak and feeble, but their Enemies are powerful and terrible, after the Fleſh; and thence 'tis that the Righteous are ſo often oppreſs'd.

And the God of infinite Wiſdom thinks fit it ſhould be ſo, *my beloved Brethren*, in order to humble us, to reduce us from our Wandrings, to diſengage us from the World, to exerciſe our Faith and Patience, to force us to have recourſe to him in our Afflictions, and to put our Confidence in him, to make us taſte of the Conſolations of his Spirit, and at the ſame time to convince us, that his good Providence takes care of his Children in their Streights and Neceſſities; and, in fine, to make us admire the wonderful Deliverances he vouchſafes to give them, when they have profited by his Chaſtiſements, and have glorified him in the time of their Tryal. And therefore now he ſays in our Text, *Fear not, thou Worm* Jacob, *and ye Men of* Iſrael: *I will help thee, ſaith the Lord, and thy Redeemer is the Holy One of* Iſrael.

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Now to underſtand well the Senſe of theſe Words and of the other Prophecies of the old Teſtament, we are to obſerve, that ſince the Jewiſh Church was the Type of the Chriſtian, and the ſame things that befel the Jewiſh Church were to befal the Chriſtian; we muſt obſerve, I ſay, that though the literal Senſe of the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament had reſpect to the Church of *Iſrael* after the Fleſh; yet their Myſtical Senſe relates to the Chriſtian Church, which is *Iſrael* after the Spirit; and moreover, that thoſe ancient Prophecies have their chief and full Accompliſhment no where but in the Chriſtian Church. They that take this remark along with them, as they read theſe antient Prophecies, will make wonderful Diſcoveries of what ſhould fall out in the Chriſtian Church: In the general, they'l find there, that the Chriſtians would be corrupted by Proſperity as the Jews were before them. That they would plunge themſelves even in the Idolatry of the Gentiles; and that afterwards theſe Idolatrous Chriſtians would for a great while oppreſs the Faithful Servants of God that Worſhip him in Purity according to his Word; but that God would relieve them at laſt, and deliver them out of all their Troubles. And to this purpoſe God ſpeaks to his deſtitute People in the Verſes afore my Text; *Fear thou not*, (ſays he) *for I am with thee; be not diſmay'd, for I am thy God; I will ſtrengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my Righteouſneſs. Behold, all they that were incens'd againſt thee, ſhall be aſhamed and confounded: They ſhall be as Nothing; and they that ſtrive with thee ſhall periſh. Thou ſhalt ſeek them, and ſhalt not find them, even them that contended with thee:*

They that War againſt thee, ſhall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. For I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, ſaying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee. Whereupon he adds the Words of my Text, *Fear not, thou Worm* Jacob, *and ye Men of* Iſrael; *I will help thee, ſaith the Lord, and thy Redeemer is the Holy One of* Iſrael.

I ſhall confine my ſelf to the Myſtical Senſe of theſe Words, and only examine them as they may relate to Chriſtians. And with the aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, which I have already implor'd, and do ſtill with all my Soul, I ſhall conſider theſe two things.

1. The Name God calls his Diſtreſſed People by, *Thou Worm Jacob, Men of Iſrael.*

2. The Conſolation he gives them in this their Deſtitute State; *Fear not,* ſays he, *I will help thee, and thy Redeemer is the Holy one of* Iſrael.

God grant, my Beloved, we may all meditate on theſe things with due attention; to the end we may receive that Inſtruction and Comfort which the Spirit of God holds forth to us in theſe Words, and is ſo neceſſary for us in this time of Diſtreſs; wherein all that will ſerve God with Purity according to his word, ſuffer a Cruel and Bloody Perſecution.

I.

God calls his People here, *Thou Worm* Jacob; or, *Jacob* thou art but a Worm. Now,

1. When God calls his People, *Jacob*; he would have us conſider them all but as one Man: And in effect, all the Faithful together compoſe but one myſtical Body, whereof Chriſt is the Head. They are all united by the Holy Spirit, they are all Members of one another; therefore they ought to live in perfect unity, and (like the Primitive Chriſtians) love one another ſo entirely as to be but one Heart and one Soul.

2. True Chriſtians are called *Jacob*, becauſe they are the Poſterity of *Jacob* after the Spirit, and Heirs of his Faith and Piety, and of the Promiſes which God made to him of old. *Jacob* parted with the food that periſheth, that he might obtain the Bleſſing of his Father and that of his God, together with the Heavenly enjoyments thereto annex'd. In like manner the Faithful ought to abandon all Earthly Advantages, that they may have a ſhare in the Glory and Felicity of Heaven.

3. Believers are call'd *Jacob*, becauſe their condition in this Life is like that of *Jacobs*. For as *Jacob* who was born after the Spirit, was heretofore Perſecuted by *Eſau* his Elder Brother that was born after the Fleſh: So Faithful Chriſtians that are Chriſtians after the Spirit, are likewiſe perſecuted by Antichriſtians who are Chriſtians after the Fleſh. Theſe wicked falſe Chriſti-

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ans reproach us every now and then, that we are but of Yesterday. The truth is, more Ancient than they; But with respect to our Reformation, which is our Spiritual Birth, we grant they are in a sort older than we, as *Esau* was older than *Jacob*.

But then, as I told you before, they are born after the Flesh, as *Esau* was, and we after the Spirit, as *Jacob* was; and that is the reason they persecute us. And this is no new thing: *Abel* that was born after the Spirit, was persecuted to Death by his Elder Brother *Cain* who was born after the Flesh. The same may be said of *Isaac* the Heir of the Promise, who was likewise persecuted by his Elder Brother *Ishmael*, that was born after the Flesh. So likewise the Prophets of old who serv'd God with purity according to his word were persecuted by the Jewish Church when it was fallen into Idolatry. We ought not therefore to be surprized that at this time we who adore God in Spirit and in Truth according to his Commandments are in like manner persecuted by a corrupted and Idolatrous Church.

Moreover, the People of God are not simply call'd *Jacob*, but *Thou Worm* Jacob. And in effect, my Friends, we are but Worms of the Earth in the presence of our God, whose greatness knows no bounds; for he fills the Heavens and the Earth. Heaven is his Throne, and the Earth is his Footstool. We are but dust and Ashes in comparison of our great God; nay, we are less than the small dust of the Ballance. Therefore he calls us Worms, that we may always remember our misery and nothingness, that we may always humble our selves in his sight, and never violate that respect which

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is due to his Sovereign Majeſty: But evermore be poſſeſſed with a Religious awe in his preſence.

Further, we are but Worms in compariſon of our Enemies: For generally the Faithful are weak and deſpicable in human appearance, whereas their Enemies are powerful and formidable in the eſteem of the World.

Beſides, God calls his People *Men of* Iſrael, or *Iſrael* that are but Men. *Iſrael* you know, my Brethren, is the name God himſelf gave *Jacob*, when he contended with him: This holy Man hearing his Brother *Eſau* was coming out againſt him with four Hundred Men, was put into a great conſternation; therefore he paſſed the whole Night in Supplications and Tears. As he was alone, the Son of God in the ſhape of Man ſtrove with him till break of Day; and when this Divine Perſon ſaw that he could not prevail againſt him, he touched the hollow of his Thigh; ſo that the hollow of *Jacobs* Thigh was out of joynt as he wreſtled with him; and he ſaid, *Let me go, for the Day breaketh*: But *Jacob* anſwered him, *I will not let thee go except thou bleſs me: And he ſaid unto him, what is thy Name? And he ſaid* Jacob; *And he ſaid, thy Name ſhall be called no more* Jacob, *but* Iſrael: *For as a Prince haſt thou power with God and Men and haſt prevailed.* As we read in the 32*d* of *Geneſis*: So again in *Hoſea, chap.* 12. We read that *By his power he prevailed with the Angel; he wept and made Supplication unto him; he found him in* Bethel, *and there he ſpake with us*: That is to ſay, he contended all the Night with his God by his Prayers and Tears; and by that means he (as it were) conquered

quered the Almighty, and obtained his Favour, Bleſſing and Succour; ſo as that he was delivered out of the aſtoniſhing danger he was in: But God thought fit his Lameneſs ſhould remain, to put him in mind that he ought to humble himſelf continually before God; in order to obtain mercy and relief in all his neceſſities. So God in my Text, when he calls his Afflicted People, *Iſrael*; 'tis that he might make us underſtand that when we are benighted in Affliction, as we are at this time, and when we fear the rage and fury of our Enemies; that then it is our Duty to humble our ſelves before God in an extraordinary manner; to repent of all our Sins, and entirely renounce them; and to have recourſe to his Mercy and Grace alone for pardon: and that we ought to ſtrive with him continually by our Prayers and Supplications, till we have diſarmed (as it were) his Almighty Arm, and obtained his Bleſſing and Aſſiſtance; and that for the time to come we ought always to ſet his fear before our Eyes, and to walk humbly with our God all the days of our Life.

'Tis for this end likewiſe he calls us *Men, ye* Men *of* Iſrael. For thereby he deſigns to put us in mind of the frailty of our Nature, and to make us conſider that ſince our life is in continual danger, either by the fury of our Enemies, or by Sickneſs, or by a thouſand other Accidents to which we are liable; we have reaſon to Pray without ceaſing, and to throw our ſelves into the Arms of our God, who alone is able to conduct and preſerve us in the midſt of all the dangers our life is continually expos'd to.

II. Now

II.

Now we are to consider the Consolation he gives his People under their Sufferings: *Fear not*, says he, *thou Worm* Jacob, *and ye Men of* Israel; *I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer is the Holy One of* Israel. Believers, my Friends, have several Reasons to be afraid; but 'tis the Will of God, that they have recourse to him alone upon all occasions.

1. The Devil uses all his Efforts to tempt us with the Pleasures, Riches and Vanities of the World: But then we are to beg of God without ceasing, that he lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from the evil One. And at the same time we must take care our selves to avoid the Occasions of Sin, and separate our selves from the Places and Persons that might induce us to offend God. We must also renounce the World, and mortifie our Bodies by moderation and Sobriety, according to the Words of St. *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 8. *Be sober, be vigilant; for your Adversary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, stedfast in the Faith.*

Moreover, we must read and meditate on the Word of God with continual Application of Mind, and constantly pray to God for the assistance of his Holy Spirit; for 'tis by his Word and Spirit he fortifies our Faith, and 'tis by Faith we are enabled to repel all the fiery Darts of the Devil.

2. If our Sins terrifie us, God commands us to have recourſe to his Mercy and Grace. *As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his way and live*, Ezek. 33. 11. In caſe we are ſincerely converted, ſo as to conceive a ſacred Horrour for ſin, and heartily renounce all our evil Habits, and ceaſe to do evil, and learn to do good; then the promiſes in *Iſa.* 1. 18. *That though our ſins, be as Scarlet, they ſhall be white as Snow; though they be red like Crimſon, they ſhall be as Wool.* To this end we muſt heartily embrace Jeſus Chriſt, as our Saviour, by a firm and lively Faith; for 'tis he that ſuffered death for us upon Earth, and now intercedes in our behalf in Heaven; 'tis he that is the *Lamb of God which taketh away the ſin of the World*, John 1. 29.

3. If Believers are at any time afflicted with bodily Diſeaſes, 'tis the pleaſure of God, that we apply our ſelves to him as the Sovereign Phyſitian of our Bodies as well as Souls; for 'tis he alone that is able to deliver us out of all our Troubles; and has promiſed that all things ſhall work together for our good, *if we do but fear him*, and profit by his Chaſtiſements.

4. The faithful people of God have likewiſe reaſon to be afraid of the Cheats and Diſguiſes of Falſe Teachers: For, as St. *Paul* ſays, 2 *Cor.* 11. 13, 14, 15. *Theſe falſe Apoſtles are deceitful Workers, transforming themſelves into the Apoſtles of Chriſt. And no marvel,*

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for Satan himſelf is transform'd into an Angel of Light; therefore it is no great thing if his Miniſters alſo be transform'd as the Miniſters of Righteouſneſs. But if Believers conſtantly addreſs themſelves to God for the aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit, God will deliver them out of the Snares of theſe falſe Teachers. *My Sheep,* ſays Chriſt, *John* 10. 28, 29. *ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them out of my Hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's Hand.* For this end Believers muſt try the Spirits, to know if they are of God. They muſt (like the Antient Bereans) examine the Doctrines that are preach'd to them, to know if they agree with the Holy Scriptures. For, as St. *Paul* ſays, *Rom.* 2. 10. the Word of GOD is the Rule of Knowledge and Truth.

5. In fine, Believers have cauſe to fear the Power and Cruelty of their Enemies. Jeſus Chriſt ſays in the Goſpel, That the Devil is a Murtherer from the beginning. The Miniſters of Satan are alſo Lyers and Murtherers like himſelf. When they cannot ſeduce and wheedle a Man into an Error, they perſecute him, and uſe their utmoſt endeavour to ruin him. We read in the Scripture, That the Devil makes uſe of two great means to endeavour to ſhake the Faith of the Elect. To ſome he offers the Glory and Advantages of the World, as he did to our Saviour before; others he ſpoils of their Goods, deprives of their Children, and loads with a thouſand Evils, as he did *Job.* And his Miniſters uſe juſt the very ſame Methods.

But as God would not have us ſuffer our ſelves to be ſeduced by Errors and Lies, nor to be led aſide by the Honours and Riches of the World; ſo on the other hand he would have us ſtand firm and impregnable againſt the Power, the Injuſtice and Cruelty of the Enemies of the truth. He requires of us to be always ready to ſuffer all ſorts of Evils and Miſeries for his Service. 'Tis he that has given us all the good things we enjoy in the World; and therefore he expects we ſhould be always diſpoſed to part with them for his Glory: 'Tis he that has given us our Children; and therefore he juſtly requires we ſhould ſubmit to his will when he permits the Enemies of his Kingdom to deprive us of them: He requires us to deliver them up to the care of his wiſe Providence, when they ſtand in competition with our Duty to God. In fine, 'tis he that has given us Being, Life and Motion; and therefore he expects we ſhould be always prepared to ſuffer Death for his Service, whenever he thinks fit to call us to ſuch a Tryal.

In a word, 'tis God that has given us all things; 'tis therefore very juſt that we ſhould love him above all things. He has created us for his own Glory; 'tis therefore very reaſonable we ſhould glorifie him both by our Life and Death. Jeſus Chriſt has ſuffered Death for us; 'tis very juſt then that we ſuffer ſomething for the advancement of his Kingdom. Our Sins deſerved the Eternal Flames of Hell; 'tis then an act of ſingular favour that God is contented we ſhould but ſuffer a little trouble in this World for his Holy Name ſake. In fine, the Glory and Happineſs

pineſs that he prepares for us in Heaven, is it not a ſufficient recompence for all that we can loſe and ſuffer for his Service upon Earth? *All things duly weighed,* ſays St. *Paul, I reckon the Sufferings of this preſent time, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that ſhall be revealed in us: For this light Affliction which is but for a ſeaſon, worketh for us a more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.*

But although God many times permits his People to be oppreſſed by reaſon of their Sins; yet his deſign is not to abandon them entirely: He only deſigns to make them better by his Chaſtiſements, and to cauſe them to return to their God with all their Heart, and put their whole confidence in him. For upon condition we turn to him, and repent of having offended him, he alſo repents of having Afflicted us, and Comforts and Delivers us out of all our Diſtreſſes.

Fear not, ſays he in my Text, *thou Worm* Jacob, *and ye Men of* Iſrael: *for I will help you, ſaith the Lord. thy Redeemer, the Holy one of* Iſrael. The God whoſe aſſiſtance we implore, my Beloved Brethren, is not as the Idols of the Gentiles that can neither ſee, nor hear, nor ſtir to deliver thoſe that invoke them. No, 'tis the Lord of Hoſts, the God of Heaven and Earth, the Great and Almighty God. He that is Infinitely Good, is ſurely good enough to have pity on our Sufferings: He that is Infinitely Wiſe, is Wiſe enough to provide for all our neceſſities: And he that is Almighty cannot want Power to deliver us out of all our troubles. He is called the *Holy one of* Iſrael, becauſe he

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is Holineſs it ſelf; and requires us to be Holy as he is Holy: And certainly he that is ſo Holy and Juſt, will not let go unpuniſhed all the injuries that are done to his Glory, all the Evils that his Children are made to ſuffer. He promiſes to help us; who is it then that can hurt us? *If God be for us, who'll be againſt us?* He tells us he is *our Redeemer*, viz. our Defender and Deliverer? what reaſon have we then to be afraid? *The Lord*, ſays *David*, *Pſal.* 27. 1, 3. *is my Light and my Salvation, whom ſhall I fear? The Lord is the Strength of my Life, of whom ſhall I be afraid? Though a Hoſt ſhould encamp againſt me, my heart ſhall not fear.* Idolaters indeed put their confidence in Creatures; but the faithful truſt in their God; he is their only Protector and Refuge. And what comfort is it to the Faithful that they have him for their Redeemer, whoſe Power knows no bounds? *Bleſſed is the Nation*, ſays *David*, *Pſal.* 33. 12. *whoſe God is the Lord; and the People whom he hath choſen for his own Inheritance. Call upon me in the day of trouble, ſays our Great God*, Pſal. 50. 15. *I will Deliver thee, and thou ſhalt Glorifie me. Fear not*, ſays he again, *Iſa.* 43: *for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy Name, thou art mine. When thou paſſeſt through the Waters; I will be with thee, and through the Rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee. When thou walkeſt through the Fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt; neither ſhall the Flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy one of* Iſrael, *thy Saviour: I gave* Egypt *for thy ranſom*, Ethiopia *and* Seba *for thee*: That is to ſay, I have deſtroyed, and will again deſtroy thy Enemies for the love of thee. Then he adds, *Since thou*

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waſt precious in my ſight, thou haſt been honourable, and I have loved thee; therefore I will give Men for thee, and People for thy Life; Fear not, for I am with thee; I will bring thy Seed from the Eaſt, and gather thee from the Weſt. I will ſay to the North, Give up; and to the South, Keep not back: Bring my Sons from far, and my Daughters from the ends of the Earth. That is to ſay, I have ſuffered you to be oppreſs'd by your Enemies, becauſe of your ſins, and to be diſperſed throughout all the Earth; but when you return to me with your whole Heart, I will, in great Compaſſion, return to you; I will bring you back from the Places of your Exile, and eſtabliſh you in the Land of your Nativity.

In effect, my Friends, how many Examples have we before our Eyes in the Holy Scriptures of the care God has in all Ages taken of his Children, and of the wonderful deliverances he has vouchſafed to give them, to the end that we may put our Confidence in him?

Jacob, when he was but young, was forc'd to leave his Father's Houſe, and to travel all alone into a very diſtant Country, to avoid the fury of his Brother *Eſau*, that would take away his Life. But the firſt Night he lay on the Road, God appear'd to him in a Dream, and told him, *Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goeſt, and will bring thee again into this Land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have ſpoke to thee of.* And indeed God was always with him; he conducted him ſafe in his

his Journey; he bleſſed Him; he bleſſed his Labour; he bleſſed his Family; he brought him again into his own Country, and appeas'd his Brother's Anger.

So *Joſeph*, when he was but a Youth of Seventeen Years, became the Object of the Jealouſie and Hatred of his Brethren. One day as he went to ſee them in the Wilderneſs, they plotted againſt him to put him to death. They threw him into a deep Pit, and afterwards took him up again to ſell him to the *Iſhmaelites*, who carryed him to *Egypt*, and ſold him there for a Slave. Sometime afterwards being falſly accus'd by his Miſtreſs, he was put in Priſon, and there he lay ſeveral Years. But God at laſt had pity on him, deliver'd him out of his Diſtreſs, and made him Governour of all *Egypt*, then a very powerful Kingdom.

Job, who was a Holy Man, and one of the greateſt Men of the Eaſt, was ſpoil'd of all his Goods, depriv'd of all his Children, and cover'd all over with Ulcers from the Sole of his Foot, to the Crown of his Head, inſomuch that he was forc'd to lie in the Duſt. In this deplorable Condition he ſhould have received (one would think) at leaſt ſome comfort from his Wife and intimate Friends. But inſtead of that, they only encreaſed his Affliction: For his Wife tempted him to murmur againſt God, that he might put an end to his Life: And his intimate Friends told him, That he muſt have been a Hypocrite and a Wicked Man, ſince God had ſtruck him

him in ſo terrible a manner. But at laſt God was mov'd with compaſſion towards him; he deliver'd him out of all his Sufferings and Miſery, reſtor'd his Health, gave as many Children as he had loſt, and Wealth twice as much as he had before, and made him live a hundred and forty Years after his Tryal.

David, who was a Man according to God's own Heart, was alſo perſecuted for a great while together by King *Saul*. He was forc'd to leave his Wife and Home, and to ſeek for Refuge in Deſarts and Caves, and even there he was ſtill purſued by his Enemy. He often found himſelf reduc'd to ſuch Extremities, and expoſed to ſuch evident Dangers, that he thought it impoſſible for him to eſcape. But he had always recourſe to his God, and God never forſook him. He did wonders to preſerve him in the midſt of ſo many Dangers, and at laſt deliver'd him out of all his Troubles, and exalted him to the Throne of *Iſrael*.

But above all, who would not admire that wonderful deliverance, which God wrought for the three young Hebrews, whoſe Hiſtory we read in *Daniel*, chap. 3. Theſe three faithful Servants of God, having refus'd to proſtrate themſelves before the Idol which King *Nebuchadnezzar* had made, this proud and mighty Prince, that had before deſtroy'd *Jeruſalem*, told them, that if they would not fall down and worſhip this Idol, he would order them to be caſt into a fiery Furnace. And he adds further, *Who is that God that ſhall deliver you out of my hands*? And they anſwered him, *Our God, whom we ſerve, is able to deliver out of the burning fiery Furnace; and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O*

King. But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not ſerve thy Gods, nor worſhip the Golden Image which thou haſt ſet up. As if they had ſaid, We know that our God is Almighty, and able to deliver us, if it ſeems good in his ſight; but if he thinks fit we ſhould die for his Glory, we are all ready to ſubmit and die. Then this proud and cruel Prince, being full of Rage and Fury, commanded that they ſhould heat the Furnace ſeven times more than it was wont to be heat; and order'd the moſt mighty Men that were in his Army, to bind them, and caſt them into the burning fiery Furnace: Which accordingly they did; but the fire conſum'd thoſe that threw them in; and, on the contrary, theſe three faithful Servants of God fell in the midſt of the Flames, without receiving the leaſt damage; the fire did nothing elſe but burn their Bonds; ſo that they walk'd in the midſt of the Flames, without being conſumed. And beſides, there appear'd with them a fourth Man, whoſe form was like the Son of God. Whereupon this Idolatrous King being amaz'd to ſee ſo great a Miracle, made them come forth out of the Furnace, and gave glory to the God of Heaven, who had ſo miraculouſly preſerv'd them in the midſt of the Flames, becauſe they had choſe to loſe their Lives, rather than diſpleaſe their God.

So *Daniel* himſelf, becauſe he continu'd to pay to God the Homage due to him, when the King by his Edict had forbid it, was caſt into the Den of Lyons: But God was always with him. He ſhut the Mouths of thoſe ravenous Beaſts, ſo that they did him no hurt. And the King ſeeing this Miracle, commanded him to be fetch'd out of the Den, and to throw in his Enemies that accus'd him

him, and they were immediately devour'd by the Lions.

So when the people of God heretofore groan'd under the Oppreſſion of the *Egyptians*, God ſmote *Egypt* with all his *Plagues*. Nay, he ſlew all their Firſt-born; and every Houſe in *Egypt* was in Mourning, and had one died out of it. So again, when the *Egyptian* Army was in purſuit of the people of God, as they were going out of *Egypt*, God covered his people with a Cloud, and divided the Red ſea to let 'em paſs thro' it: But when the *Egyptians* purſued 'em into the middle of the Waters, God caus'd the Sea to return upon them, and ſo that great Army was all ſwallow'd up, and not one of them eſcap'd. In ſhort, the Holy Scriptures are full of the great wonders that God wrought from time to time for the deliverance of thoſe that fear, and put their whole confidence in him: Therefore ſays he in my Text, *Fear not, thou Worm* Jacob, *and ye Men of* Iſrael; *for I will help thee, ſaith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of* Iſrael.

What we have ſaid is enough for the Explication of the words; now let us apply what we have heard to our ſelves.

Here we ſee, my beloved Brethren, that all the Faithful are repreſented as one Man, and compoſe but one Myſtical Body; therefore we ought to live together in Union, as being Members one of another. We are all animated by the ſame Spirit, to wit, the Spirit of Chriſt; and therefore we ſhould be all joyn'd together by the Bond of a fervent and unfeign'd Affection: *For by this* (ſays our Saviour, *Joh.* 13. 35.) *ſhall all Men know that ye are my Diſciples, if you love one another.*

We may learn alſo hence, That in order to have a part in the promiſe which God has made, to aſſiſt us, and to be our Deliverer, we muſt be the Spiritual and Myſtical *Jacob* and *Iſrael*; that is to ſay, we muſt imitate the Faith and Piety of the Patriarch *Jacob*, whom God himſelf calls

Iſrael The promiſes of God, my Brethren, were made to the Patriarchs and their Poſterity; and tho' we are not their *Poſterity after the Fleſh*, yet we are their *Spiritual Poſterity*, if we imitate their Faith and Piety.

Examine your ſelves therefore by this Rule, that you may know whether you are the Children of the Patriarchs, and can claim a Title in the favour of God, in his Deliverance and Salvation. If you bear the image of the Patriarchs, if you have their Faith and Piety, if you do their Works, you are their Children, and God will bleſs you, as he did them; he will deliver you out of the Hands of your Enemies; he will load you with his Favours and Benefits, and will one day make you partakers of a bleſſed Immortality. But if you imitate not their Example, you are not their Children, and have no ſhare in the promiſes God made to them.

Abraham, when God commanded him to leave his Country, and part with his Relations, preſently complied with the Will of his God, tho' he knew not where he was to go. And again, when God commanded him to ſacrifice *Iſaac* his beloved Son, he prepar'd himſelf without any more adoe, to execute this dreadful command, having this confidence in God, that he could even reſtore his Son to him again, by raiſing him from the dead. And in effect, the Apoſtle takes notice, that he was indeed reſtor'd to him again by a kind of Reſurrection. So *Iſaac* himſelf ſubmitted to the Will of his God, and put himſelf in a condition to die, as a Teſtimony of his Obedience to him. And *Jacob* was contented to deprive himſelf of the Food that periſheth, in order to obtain the Cœleſtial and Eternal Inheritance: And afterwards he left his Father's Houſe, that he might avoid the violence of his Brother *Eſau*, who deſign'd to have kill'd him. And ſo likewiſe all the Patriarchs did always glorifie God by their Zeal, by their Piety,

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and by a Pure, Holy, and Unblameable Life.

God ſets us theſe Examples, to the end we might ſquare our Lives by them, if we would be the Myſtical Poſterity of theſe Holy Men, and would have a part in the Promiſes that were made to them. Now when God ſuffers his Church to be perſecuted, he calls upon us to leave our Country and our Friends, to forſake our Goods, and renounce our eaſe and pleaſures, to ſuffer the loſs of our Children, and even to expoſe our Lives for his Glory and Service. Therefore, if we deſire to obtain his Bleſſing, his Deliverance and Salvation, we muſt ſubmit to his Will, as the Patriarchs did of old. We muſt alſo glorifie him by a Holy Life, by our Juſtice, our Zeal, our Charity, and Piety: We muſt cauſe our Light to ſhine before Men, that they ſeeing our good Works, may together with us, give Glory to God. Otherwiſe we muſt expect to be treated, not as his Children, but as Baſtards and Unbelievers.

What can you expect then, you miſerable Worldlings, whoſe Heart is always bow'd down to the Earth like that of Beaſts; you impenitent Sinners that always perſiſt in your Vices and Diſorders, Injuſtice and Frauds? You follow the multitude that is running in the broad way to Hell. Therefore if you repent not, you muſt expect to periſh with this Reprobate Multitude. You are not the Children of the Patriarchs, ſince you do not their Works. You do the Works of the Devil, that impure Spirit, who is the Father of Lies and Impurity, of Fraud and Injuſtice; and what can you expect, you prophane and rebellious Souls! who, that you might live at your eaſe in your Houſes, and might preſerve your Goods, your Children and your Repoſe, are revolted from

God,

God, and continue ſtill in the ſame Spirit of Rebellion? Alas! you are not neither the Children of the Patriarchs, ſince you imitate not their Zeal and Piety, and are not ready to loſe and ſuffer all things, as they were, for the Glory of your God. You do alſo the Works of the Devil, who was the firſt Apoſtate, the firſt Rebel againſt God. Therefore, if you repent not, you ſhall be condemn'd with him to the eternal Flames of Hell. For you are not willing to follow the Example of two or three hundred thouſand Faithful Servants of God, who have abandon'd all for his Glory, have left their Country and their Kindred, and parted with their deareſt Friends, and have likewiſe expos'd their Lives to great dangers, that they might comply with the Will of their God, and have an intereſt in his Favour and Comfort.

God has for a great while continued to ſend his Faithful Servants to you, to bring you back to your God, and a great many of them have already ſuffer'd death for your ſakes. 'Tis true, you give them a Hearing; but a great many among you perſiſt ſtill in your Vices and Backſlidings. Therefore as many faithful Miniſters, as have preach'd, or do ſtill preach Repentance to them without ſucceſs, ſhall be ſo many Witneſſes one day in Judgment againſt them, and ſhall condemn them.

Oh! wretched Sinners that you are! You would enjoy the Pleaſures of the World, like prophane *Eſau*: But you ſhall be depriv'd one day of the eternal Pleaſures of Paradiſe. You would have your Portion in this Life, but one Day your Portion ſhall be in the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimſtone. You would preſerve your eaſe in this World, but you ſhall be eternally tormented with the Devils in Hell. There

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will be weeking and gnaſhing of Teeth: And theſe horrid *Puniſhments* ſhall never have an end.

But as for you, Believers, that deſire to have a ſhare in the promiſes of your God, be ye followers of the Faith, the Piety and Holineſs of the Patriarchs; and you ſhall receive the Crown of Righteouſneſs, which God has prepared for all them that fear him, and give glory to his Name. Let us not ſuffer our ſelves to be tempted, my beloved Brethren, by the Criminal Pleaſures of Sin, nor by the Riches and Vanities of the VVorld. Let us pray to God without ceaſing, that he would not lead us into Temptation, but deliver us from the wicked One: And at the ſame time let us diſengage our Hearts from the VVorld, and ſeparate our ſelves from the *Places* and *Perſons* that may lead us into ſin. Let us mortifie our Bodies by Moderation and Sobriety: Let us continually read and meditate on the VVord of God, that we may become ſtrong in the Faith; and let us evermore beg of God the aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit, that he may make us always walk in his Holy VVays.

Let us not ſuffer our ſelves to be ſurpriz'd by the ſpecious Pretences of falſe Teachers. They come to us in Sheeps Cloathing, but within they are Ravenous VVolves. At firſt ſight one would think they had the Sweetneſs and Charity of Angels; but no ſooner do the Faithful give them to underſtand that they will not defile themſelves with Idolatry, and that they are reſolved to ſerve God with purity, according to his Commandments; but theſe falſe Teachers diſcover a Cruelty not inferior to that of the moſt Savage Beaſts. You will know them by their Fruits, ſays

ſays our Saviour. Examine well their Conduct, and you'l ſee that they bear the Image of the Devil. The Devil, as we ſaid before, is *a Liar and a Murtherer from the beginning*. Now theſe falſe Teachers, are not they Liars like him? Do not they teach Errours and Lies? And do not they ſpread Abroad Fables and falſe Miracles, to ſeduce the Simple and the Ignorant? Have they not likewiſe violated Edicts, Treaties of Peace, and the moſt ſolemn Oaths, which are the Pledges and Seals of the Publick Faith? On the other hand, are not they Cruel and Murtherers, as well as the Devil? Do not they every day make the Faithful ſuffer Torments, Martyrdoms and horrible Maſſacres? Do not they likewiſe uſe, on all occaſions, the two great means, which the Devil invented, to endeavour to ſhake the Faith of the Elect? Do not they offer to ſome the Riches and the Honours of this World? Do not they propoſe to them Penſions, Offices of the greateſt Truſt and Dignity, and other Worldly Advantages? And do not they ſpoil others of their Goods, take away their Children from them, and oppreſs them with a thouſand Evils?

We muſt therefore, *my beloved Brethren*, refuſe with horrour to hold Communion with theſe Miniſters of Satan; and if it be the Will of God that we ſuffer for the Intereſt of his Glory and Service, let us ſubmit to his Sacred Diſpoſal, and prepare our ſelves to loſe and ſuffer all things, that we may give him a Teſtimony of our Obedience and Faithfulneſs. Let us remember that we were created for his Glory, and that we ought to glorifie him both in Life and Death. Let us remember that we ought to love him above all that is deareſt to us in the

the World, more than Father, Mother, Wife, Children, Lands and Vineyards; nay, more than Life it ſelf, if we would be his Children, and deſire to partake of his Salvation.

Let us conſider well, *my beloved Brethren*, that this Earth is not our Home; that 'tis a Valley of Tears, the place of our Sojourning, full of Miſery and Trouble; and that our True Country is Heaven. The Patriarchs, whoſe Children we are, had not ſo much as where to ſet the Sole of their Feet; they were Pilgrims and Strangers upon Earth; they ſought a City that had ſolid Foundations, whoſe Builder and Founder is God. We muſt therefore renounce all earthly Things, and continually breathe after the Glory and Happineſs of Heaven.

Let us conſider again, that if God permits us to be perſecuted, 'tis to the end that we may diſcover to the World our Faith, Piety and Conſtancy; and that this Tryal, by which God is glorified, may alſo turn to our own Glory, Salvation and Comfort. *Bleſſed is the Man that endureth Temptation*, ſaith St. *James*, ch. 1. 12. *for when he is tryed, he ſhall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him. Bleſſed are they that are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake*, ſays our Saviour, *Mat.* 5. 10. *for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Now for a ſeaſon we are in heavineſs, through manifold Temptations: But*, as St. *Peter* ſays, 1 Epiſt. 1. 7, 8, 9. *'tis that the Tryal of our Faith, being much more precious than of Gold that periſheth, may be found unto Praiſe, and Honour, and Glory at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt: whom having not ſeen, we love; in whom, tho' now we ſee him not, yet believing, we rejoyce with joy unſpeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of our Faith, even the Salvation of our Souls.*

Nevertheleſs, *my Friends*, we muſt acknowledge that our ſins are the cauſe of all the Evils we ſuffer. The Churches of *France* were abominably corrupted in their Manners. Therefore God has pour'd out his Judgments upon them and his Wrath is ſtill burning againſt us, becauſe our Repentance is not ſuch as it ought to be. We muſt then, every one of us, turn himſelf from his evil Courſe; and thoſe that have been ſo unhappy as to enter into the Communion of *Babylon*, muſt for ever renounce her Abominations for the time to come. We muſt be poſſeſs'd with a Sacred Horrour for our Sins, and in a Holy Manner afflict our Souls, and humble our Selves at the Foot of the Throne of the Divine Majeſty; we muſt have recourſe to the Mercy and Grace of God in Jeſus Chriſt, who has died for the remiſſion of our Sins. We muſt ſtrive continually with God by our Tears and Supplications, and not let him go till he has bleſſed us; and the good God will at laſt ſuffer himſelf to be overcome by our Cries and Supplications. *Tho' our ſins be as Scarlet, they ſhall be as white as Snow: tho' they be red like Crimſon, they ſhall be as Wool.* Then will he be mov'd by our Miſery to give us Succour and Relief: *He will bow down the Heavens, and come down, and deliver us out of the great Waters that ſurround us.*

Now good Men are oppreſs'd; *He that departeth from evil, maketh himſelf a prey*, Iſa. 59. 15. They that would be true to God, ſerve him with Purity, and ſing Praiſes to his Holy Name, are afflicted and perſecuted: whereas Idolaters, the perfidious *Judas's*, the Drunkards, the Laſcivious, the Wicked, the Swearers and Blaſphemers are tolerated and countenanc'd in the World. But theſe diſorders ſhall not always laſt: *Yet a little while, and he that is to come, ſhall come and will not tarry.*

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Let's take courage then, *my Friends*, & not ſuffer our ſelves to be frighted with the Menaces of the Enemies of the *Truth*. Let us throw our ſelves into the Arms of our God; let us retire under the Shadow of his Wings; let us deliver our ſelves up to the conduct of his wiſe Providence, and put our confidence in him; he promiſes to be our Protector and Deliverer; *and he is faithful in all his Promiſes*. Let us have theſe comfortable words always in our Thoughts, *Fear not, thou Worm* Jacob, *and ye Men of* Iſrael; *I will help thee, ſaith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of* Iſrael. We are but Worms of the Earth, in compariſon of our Enemies; but let us remember, that the Lord of Hoſts, the Great God, is our Strength. VVe are mortal Men, our Life is continually in danger; but let us remember, that he that has Life and Death in his Power, promiſes to aſſiſt and protect us. Let us not be afraid then, ſince he will be our Redeemer and Defender. He commands us to call upon him in our Diſtreſs, and promiſes to deliver us out of it, to the end that we may glorifie him; Let us then make him our Refuge; let us cry to him continually; and he'll come to our relief, that ſo we may bleſs him for it, all the days of our Life. God will do wonders for our ſakes, as he has always done in favour of his Children. *For*, as St. *Paul* ſays, *Rom.* 15.4. *whatſoever things were written afore time, were written for our Learning; that we thro' Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope*; that is to ſay, that we may have this confidence in God, that in caſe we imitate the Faith, the Piety, and the Fidelity of thoſe antient Servants of God, whom the Scriptures mention, God will vouchſafe to us the ſame Deliverances, and the ſame Comforts as he vouchſafed to them on the like occaſions.

He'll reſtore our Children to us again, as he did to *Abraham* of old. He'll preſerve our Lives, as he did *Iſaac*'s. He'll be always with us, as he was with *Jacob*; and give

us

us the same Protection that he gave him. He'll release us out of our Prisons, as he did *Joseph*. He'll deliver us out of all our Sufferings and Misery, as he did *Job*; and like him, will put us in a happier Condition than that we were in before our Tryal. He'll put an end to all our Troubles, as he did formerly to those of *David*. Now we are in the Furnace, as the three believing *Hebrews* were of old; but God will preserve us, as he did them, in the midst of the Flames. The fire of Persecution will only serve to purifie us, and to consume the Bonds of Sin within us; and he'll bring us out of the Furnace of Affliction, much brighter than we were before. Now we are in the midst of Lyons, as *Daniel* was of old: But God will shut the Mouth of these Savage Beasts; he'll repress the Violence of our Enemies, that encompass us about on all sides, and come not behind the very Tygers and Lyons in Cruelty. Now we groan under hard Bondage, as the People of God did heretofore in *Egypt*; but God will deliver us out of it with a strong Hand and stretched out Arm. Now we are terrified with the Power of our Enemies; But since 'tis against God they wage War, God tells us in his Word, 2 *Chr.* 20. 15. *that the Battle is not Our's, but God's*; and that he'll fight for us himself, while we are singing Praises to his Holy Name, as he fought heretofore for his People in the time of King *Jehoshaphat*. Now they that afflict us, laugh at us for putting our confidence in God, as if he was not strong enough to deliver us out of their Hands; But God will send an Angel to destroy them, as he did the Army of the King of the *Assyrians*, who blasphem'd the Lord and ridicul'd them that put their confidence in him, as we read *Isa.* 36.

For this end, *my beloved Brethren*, let us live in the fear of the Lord; let us obey his Holy Commandments; be faithful to him; confess his Truth; and continually implore his Mercy, Favour and Relief; and this God will hear our Cries, will hearken to our Prayers, will plead our Cause, will help and deliver us, will fill us with his Graces and Comforts, will load us with his Benefits, and will one day take us up to Heaven, to make us happy for ever with himself. Which God of his infinite Mercy grant. Now to Him, Father, Son, and Spirit, one only God beleſſed for ever, *be Honour and Glory, world without end.* Amen.

Preach'd in several places in the Wilderness, July 23, *and* 31. 1692. *and* Septemb. 14. 1693.

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